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Sandinista atrocities revealed by recent defector

By Roger Fontaine
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A recent Nicaraguan defector said yesterday he has direct knowledge of Sandinista atrocities, including the arrest and torture of 500 Miskito Indians, 150 of whom were later executed.

The defector, Alvaro Baldizon Aviles, 26, who fled to Honduras July 1, served in the Interior Ministry, which controls Nicaragua's police and its internal security forces.

Mr. Baldizon, in a press conference held at the State Department, also told reporters through an interpreter that top Sandinista officials helped smuggle cocaine to the United States to raise money for arms to fight U.S.-supported rebel forces and that 200 Cuban advisers hold key supervisory positions in Nicaragua's Interior Ministry.

Mr. Baldizon joined the Sandinista police in April 1980 and became the chief investigator of a special investigations commission of the Interior Ministry for 2½ years. He received a 10-month criminology course in the Soviet Union.

He is the highest ranking defector from that ministry, according to State Department officials.

The Cuban advisers at the Interior Ministry, Mr. Baldizon said, are at every level except the lowest office units.

"In Nicaragua, they indirectly give the orders because they have the technical know-how," he said. "Nicaraguans don't have it yet."

The Cubans, who rotate every two years, according to Mr. Baldizon, supervise every plan and operation. Any Nicaraguan officer who acts without prior Cuban approval will be demoted if there is any failure, he said.

Mr. Baldizon refused to estimate the total number of Cubans in the country, but said that in the Sandinista army there were "15 times more there than in the Ministry of the Interior" — a number that would

total 3,000.

Previously, the State Department had estimated a total of 2,500 to 3,500 advisers in the Nicaraguan army and security forces. The department also believes there are another 3,500 to 4,500 Cubans in other, civilian-oriented jobs.

Backing up reports last April and later by The Washington Times linking Nicaragua and Cuba to drug shipments to the United States, Mr. Baldizon said Interior Minister Tomas Borge and Vice Minister Luis Carrion actively engaged in the transfer of Colombian cocaine through Nicaragua to the U.S. market.

He said he had firsthand knowledge of one air shipment late last year that was diverted to a rural airfield where Mr. Borge picked up the cocaine to avoid customs inspection.

Another police officer had reported the incident and Mr. Baldizon was ordered to investigate.

"Some days after, Borge called me into his office and called off the investigation," he told the news conference. He said he was told that the matter was a state secret and not to be mentioned further.

Mr. Baldizon said cocaine trafficking was still going on when he left Nicaragua on July 1. "Cocaine

traffic is a necessity because of the need for dollars, and my understanding is that it will not stop," he said.

Mr. Baldizon also charged that the Sandinista regime had probably executed thousands of people — many of them peasants — but said that his figures were an extrapolation of the hundreds he knew about from firsthand knowledge as an investigator of internal abuses. The execution orders themselves, he said, have been destroyed.

The killings were carried out by a mixed commission of army and police officers, he said.

For those hundreds of names that were inquired about by the inter-American human rights commission, Mr. Baldizon's commission was ordered to concoct cover stories for their disappearances.

But many others not identified by the OAS commission went completely unexplained, even though his investigations turned up other culprits he was ordered not to identify.

He said he had personal knowledge of the executions of 150 Miskito Indians between July and September of 1982.

The Nicaraguan defector said most of those executed were listed as "potential enemies" of the revolution, according to criteria established by the security police. Usually, he said, they were suspected of giving aid to the resistance forces or having a relative join the Contras. Many of them were also peasants whose names are not known by the OAS commission because family members do not know how to make contact, or they remain silent in fear of police reprisals, he added.

Meanwhile, a newly formed alliance of Nicaraguan Indians and blacks hope to join forces with a united military front of rebels to overthrow the Marxist Sandinista government, the group's leaders were quoted as saying in Miami yesterday.

The leaders of the new Indian rebel coalition represent a 2-week-old group called KISAN, an Indian-language acronym for Nicaraguan Coast Indian Unity. They say they represent 250,000 Indians and English-speaking blacks from Nicaragua's Atlantic coastal zone.

KISAN leader Wycliffe Diego said the group will ask the Reagan administration to grant it full membership in the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO), a coalition that will disburse \$27 million in U.S. "non-lethal" aid to the anti-Sandinista rebels.